

religious practice. We must maintain these safeguards, even as we encourage citizens to put their faith into action and thus to enrich our community life.

My colleagues, support the carefully crafted Democratic substitute.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. Mr. Speaker, regarding the so-called faith-based initiative, if I were convinced that this initiative posed no threat to separation of church and State, I could support it. And if I were convinced it held no potential for the Government telling us what to believe, I could support it. But I am not convinced.

I just want to point to one particular provision in the bill that asks those receiving funds to set up not a separate 501(c)(3) to receive the dollars and be audited, but only a separate account. It specifically states that in the legislation. Religious organizations or any organization that is not for-profit receiving government money should be required to set up a separate 501(c)(3) to give them tax exempt status and to keep the distinction between the religious side of the organization and its social service activities.

In my district, the Lutheran Church already provides nursing home care, for example, through Wolf Creek Lutheran Home; but they have a separate 501(c)(3). Jewish Community Services, the same. Islamic Social Services, the same. The establishment of the 501(c)(3) principle in the base legislation is absolutely essential. I cannot support the faith-based initiative as currently constituted.

As a freedom lover who happens to be a Roman Catholic, I also know if our faith isn't deep enough, as sacrificing people, we don't need government money to subsidize us. We must give of our substance, not come to rely on a government subsidy.

But partnership between government and faith-based groups has its place. If this initiative—or any faith-based initiative—had the proper safeguards, I could give it my support. On page 29 of the bill, any funds received by religious groups under this program shall be placed in a “separate account,” not a separately incorporated 501(c)(3) legal entity. This means federal funds will be awarded directly to religious organizations. This simply defies our Bill of Rights and the separation of church and state so essential to the maintenance of our fundamental freedoms.

This bill should require religious organizations to establish separate 501(c)(3) organizations and give them a separate legal standing from the religious mission of the faith-based group and a tax-exempt status. Of course most involved in social services already do. In that way, they can take government money but maintain the separate legal structure that is necessary to protect religious freedom from government incursion.

Of course, grantees should employ strict prohibitions against discrimination in hiring and the provision of services and abide by all applicable federal, state and local laws prohibiting discrimination.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, religious organizations providing social services—augmented by taxpayer dollars—is hardly a new concept. And, we have learned an enormous amount from this rich and worthy experience. Let me give you some examples:

The Sisters of Mercy, the Franciscans, the Grey Nuns, the Dominicans and members of other orders minister to the needy in hospitals and hospices and homeless shelters throughout America. But they do so through non-profit organizations that are separate and legally distinct.

In my district, the Lutheran Church provides nursing home care and other service through Wolf Creek Lutheran Home. But they have a separate 501(c)(3).

Jewish Community Services throughout the nation offer social services, including federally-subsidized independent housing for elderly and handicapped people. But they keep a separate accounting through a 501(c)(3) status.

Islamic Social Services Association provides a wide range of social services to the growing Muslim population in North America—through its non-profit arm.

Certainly we want to encourage religious organizations to provide social services to our fellow Americans. And certainly we want to do nothing that would discourage such compassionate activity.

Private philanthropy has its place, and we want to encourage our fellow citizens to give of their time and money to help the less fortunate. We know private philanthropy will never be a complete substitute for substantial social services funded by the U.S. Government. Our needs in America are so great, and many of the private groups boats are so small.

I believe it is crucial—in order to protect taxpayer dollars and also to protect religious institutions from government interference—to keep not just two separate accounts, but separate and distinct organizations legally incorporated with their mission clearly defined.

That is why the establishment of 501(c)(3) organizations is so crucial—not just for the integrity of government grant money but also for the independence of the religious organizations using it.

I cannot support the faith-based initiative as currently proposed. Please vote “no” on the rule and on the bill, unless amended.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF).

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule and to H.R. 7. The Founding Fathers established a separation of church and State out of a solicitude for religion and for the State; and this initiative as drafted, I believe, is a threat to both. It is a threat to the State and the efficient operation of its services by preventing the State from ensuring that Federal funds are spent.

Who among us in this body is prepared to ask for an audit of a Jewish synagogue or the Catholic Church or the Mormon Temple for its expenditures of Federal funds? I would say probably none of us. And so the effective delivery of services cannot be effectively audited.

But more than that, the risk of excessive entanglement of religion, of

having religious denominations compete with each other for Federal grants, becoming vendors of Federal services, of being told if they receive Federal money they cannot talk about faith being a necessary part of recovery, is this a position we want the Government to be in, saying if you take the Federal money, you cannot talk about faith, but if you do not, you can?

This is not in the best interest of either State or church, and I urge a “no” vote.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS).

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, as a person of faith, I believe in the power of faith to change lives, and I believe in the good work of faith-based groups. Yet today I join with over 1,000 religious leaders across America, and with civil rights groups, such as the NAACP, and education groups, such as the National PTA and the National Association of School Administrators, who strongly oppose this bill.

Mr. Speaker, when Members cast their vote on this bill today, I hope they will ask themselves two fundamental questions: one, should citizens' tax dollars be used to directly fund churches and houses of worship? And, two, is it right to discriminate in job hiring when using Federal dollars?

I believe the answer to those two questions is no, and that is why I oppose this bill. Sending billions of tax dollars each year directly to churches is unconstitutional under the first amendment. It will lead to government regulation of our churches, which is exactly why our Founding Fathers rejected the idea of using tax dollars to fund our churches when they wrote the Bill of Rights.

It would be a huge step backwards in our Nation's march for civil rights to allow groups to fire employees from federally funded jobs solely because of their religious faith. Having a religious test for tax-supported jobs is wrong. No American citizen, not one, should have to pass someone else's religious test to qualify for a federally funded job.

Mr. Speaker, this idea was a bad idea when Mr. Madison and Mr. Jefferson and our Founding Fathers rejected it in writing the Constitution two centuries ago. It is a bad idea today. This bill will harm religion, not help it. I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on this unfair rule and “no” on this bill.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN).

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time, and I rise today in support of H.R. 7 and encourage my colleagues to vote for this important legislation.

There is little doubt that faith-based organizations are often the most effective providers of social services in our communities. They are highly motivated, generous in spirit, and their motivation stems from a deep conviction about how one should live daily by giving to others in need. I have had a very